

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

May 25, 2010

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on May 25, 2010, pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Committee Chairman, Dale Venturini, Dave Duffy, Paul MacDonald, Letitia Carter, Patrick Butler, Jason Fowler and Jeffrey Hirsh.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Betty Sullivan and Kim Keough, RICCA; Tim Muldoon, John McGinn, Arlene Oliva and Amanda Marzullo, RICC; Martha Sheridan, Neil Schriever and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen and Jodi Duclos, DDC; Tim Walsh, Newport CVB and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM. Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Ms. Carter it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the April meeting.

Ms. Venturini reminded everyone that their Marketing Plans are due at the next meeting in June.

CVB

Ms. Venturini recognized Neil Schriever. Mr. Schriever began his Power Point Presentation. Mr. Schriever reported that year to date room night production related to the Convention Center has surpassed last year. He noted that definite bookings include several meetings and events for the current year. Ms. Venturini asked Mr. Schriever if the CVB is seeing more optimism from meeting planners. Mr. Schriever responded that there is more optimism but clients remain cautious concerning room nights and attendance. Mr. Schriever reported that the sales team had attended Trade Shows, events and made sales calls in Twinsburg Ohio where they represented the destination at the SMG presentation to Experient. Mr. Schriever noted that sales people participated in the National Association of Sports Commissions in New Orleans, conducted media desksides and attended Conference Direct Show in Atlanta and made sales calls and represented the destination at an SMG presentation in St. Louis. Mr. Schriever reported that upcoming events and trips will include the PCMA Foundation Dinner in Washington DC, a cooking with herbs event in Boston as well as events in Providence and Chicago. Mr. Schriever noted that we were not selected for Gov Energy. He said that the reasons given were the cost of travel and the fact that they were here recently. Mr. Schriever

stated that the vacant sales position at the CVB has been filled. Mr. McCarvill asked if Mr. Schriever could see any opportunity resulting from the developments in Arizona. Ms. Sheridan stated that there is a general unspoken code that we will not solicit business because of difficult situations at another facility. She said that if we are contacted by an event or meeting planner we would be happy to discuss moving their event to Providence. Kristen Adamo reported that April GoProvidence.com web site visits were up 30% over April 2009. She also reported that the social media is being used as well as gift certificate giveaways to promote Providence Restaurant Weeks. Ms. Adamo noted that Yahoo named Providence as one of the “Top 10 Underrated Cities in the US”. Ms. Adamo stated that the CVB is assembling new print and digital media planning guide in conjunction with Newport CVB and RI Monthly. Ms. Adamo said that new sales collateral material is being developed for the Rhode Island Convention & Entertainment Complex. Ms. Sheridan reported that the CVB’s web site would be updated during the next few months. Ms Adamo reported that Restaurant Week would be July 11th through 24th and 93 restaurants will participate. Mr. Fowler commented that the tourism roundtable discussions were very good and helpful. Ms. Venturini said that she has had some very good feedback from those that attended the roundtable.

DUNKIN’ DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Cohen updated the Committee on the Dunkin’ Donuts Center’s

sales and marketing objectives. She noted that the goal of sponsorships and signage for Fiscal Year 2010 is \$870,875 and that as of the end of April we have sales of \$736,181. Contracts were finalized with Newport Storm, New England Copy Specialist and the Providence Bruins. Ms. Cohen said that the staff is negotiating with Dave & Busters, Dippin Dots and Coca Cola is expected to assist in our efforts to recycle. Ms. Cohen reported that sales of the party suites have significantly outpaced budget projections. She said that suites are sold for Hot Night – Drake, Justin Bieber and Aventura. Ms. Cohen said that suites are available for select performances of Walking with Dinosaurs and Disney on Ice Toy Story 3. Ms. Cohen noted that the new media objective is to maximize social media tools to promote events at the Dunkin' Donuts Center. Ms. Cohen said that the sales team took advantage of social media sites like Facebook and Mom Blogs to promote the circus in April, worked with local Mom blog, kifinfo.com to promote a ticket giveaway and a special discount ticket to the circus. Ms. Cohen noted that the results from the Kidinfo promotion generated 591 sold tickets in a week. Ms. Cohen included examples of new media tools in her presentation. Ms. Cohen presented highlights of interactive events that will take place to promote Walking with Dinosaurs. She said that Clearchannel will sponsor a family area at the Newport Chowder Cook-off, there will be a Baby T-Rex Dinosaur Dig at Scarborough State Beach with ABC 6, and a Baby T-Rex Father's Day event at Roger Williams Park with WCTK Radio. Ms. Cohen said that PBS will air "The Making of Walking with Dinosaurs and there will be an electronic sign doing a

10 day countdown to the show sponsored by Cox Communications. Ms. Cohen stated that NBC is offering a \$10.00 discount on all opening night tickets. Ms. Cohen also reported that there are RIPTA buses that have been wrapped and are seen all over the State.

CONVENTION CENTER

John McGinn presented the Convention Center update. He reminded the Committee that the Convention Center had reached their revenue goal for the year and that revenue continues to increase over projections. Mr. McGinn said that events performed better than forecast. Mr. McGinn reported that new tradeshow/convention prospects include The Knit & Crochet Show, Northeast Security Systems Contractors Expo and the North American Handmade Bicycle Show. Mr. McGinn said that contracts under negotiation for conventions are the Society of Naval Architects & Marine Engineers, IEEE Power Engineering Society, IEEE Computer Vision & Pattern Recognition and the Hearing Loss Association of America. Mr. McGinn noted that the sales team had participated in a meeting of the Association of Chief Executives in Sports where SMG had sponsored the opening reception and dinner. He said that they met with executive directors of USA National Governing Bodies for Olympic Sports and made sales calls to the local NGB offices. Mr. McGinn reported that there are several meetings and contracted events booked in the upcoming months. Mr. McGinn said that the sales team is negotiating for a conference in October 2010 and a trade show for

January 2011. Mr. McGinn stated that events that have been contracted include Growsmart RI, a Custom Car Show and a Winter Sports trade show. Mr. McGinn reported that several groups have visited or will visit in the near future for site tours.

VMA

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Carter to address the committee and update them on VMAF news. Ms. Carter reported that the VMAF had met recently to discuss branding of the theater. Ms. Carter noted that the VMAF had concluded that the name of the facility should be changed. Ms. Carter said that the name change was discussed at length. Mr. Duffy urged caution in changing the name. He said that we do not want to dishonor the Veterans. Ms. Carter said that the VMAF took the Veterans into consideration and therefore they feel that the theater should be known as The Vets. Ms. Keough commented that naming and branding collateral would be costly. Ms. Adamo noted that renaming and rebranding would have a ripple effect on the CVB web site as well. Ms. Venturini suggested that an estimate of the cost would be necessary before anything is done. Mr. McCarvill noted that we must first deal with the functionality of the facility and that it would be some time before renaming and branding could have a major impact. There is time to do this right.

WEB SITE AND PR

Ms. Keough reported that web site training for those responsible for updating the site had taken place. Ms. Keough noted that the photo project is going well and that the photographer has been able to get some very good shots of events. She said that we will now have a photo gallery to use for presentations and the web site. Ms. Keough noted that she had reinstituted in-house marketing meetings. Ms. Keough stated that she is working on PR for the Roller Derby, Fine Furnishing Show and the American Specialty Toy Show.

NEWPORT CVB

Mr. Welsh stated that there seems to be a more positive attitude in Newport regarding the tourist season. He said that more cruise ships are expected this Summer and said that if the weather is good visitors from the ships will spend some time in the shops, restaurants and other tourist attractions in the City. Mr. Welsh reported that the RFP for the America's Cup Race has been submitted.

Ms. Venturini asked if there was any other business. Hearing none she asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Fowler and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:35 pm